



Missouri Environmental Public Health Tracking



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GLOSSARY

Abiotic- Non-living chemical or physical factors in the environment.

Acute health effect- An immediate or adverse health effect that may be caused by the exposure to a sufficient dose of chemical or contaminant. The symptoms can be severe and dangerous but are often reversible once the exposure stops. An example would be exposure to carbon monoxide.

Adverse birth outcomes- Negative pregnancy results such as pre-term births, low birth weight, congenital abnormalities, and miscarriage.

Adverse health effect- A change in body functions or cell structure that can lead to disease or health problems.

Age-adjusted rate- A measure or rate that has been statistically modified to eliminate the effect of different age distributions in the different populations. This allows health measures such as rates of diseases and death to be compared among several communities with different age groups.

Aggregate- A sum, mass, or assemblage of particulars formed of separate units collected into a whole.



Air pollution- Particles and gases in the air that can harm people, animals, plants, and even objects such as buildings and statues. Air pollution can be present as a solid, liquid, or gas and is usually found outdoors but can also exist indoors.

Air Quality Index (AQI)- The AQI, is the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) index for reporting daily air quality. It is an indicator of how clean or polluted outdoor air is. EPA calculates the AQI for five major air pollutants regulated by the Clean Air Act: ground-level ozone, particle pollution (also known as particulate matter), carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide. For each of these pollutants, EPA has established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to protect public health.

Air Quality System (AQS)- EPA's database that contains measurements of air pollutant concentrations in the 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The measurements include both criteria air pollutants and hazardous air pollutants.

Air toxic (Also hazardous air pollutant or toxic air pollutant)- Any air pollutant that may cause serious or irreversible long-term health effects in humans. Health effects are toxin-specific, but may include cancer, developmental effects, reproductive problems, neurological disorders, and genetic mutations. They include pollutants for which a national ambient air quality standard does not exist.

Ambient air- The open air or outdoor air that we breathe. Ambient air is a mixture of invisible and odorless gases, mostly nitrogen and oxygen, with smaller amounts of water vapor, argon, carbon dioxide, neon, helium, and hydrogen.



Analysis- The process of studying a substance or its components to gain a better understanding of it.

Analyte- A substance measured in the laboratory. It is the chemical for which a sample (such as water, air, or blood) is tested. An example would be lead in a blood sample.

Anencephaly - A birth defect where there is an absence of the skull, with cerebral hemispheres completely missing or reduced to small masses attached to the base of the skull; this condition is fatal. Anencephaly is one type of neural tube defect.

Arsenic- A naturally occurring element widely distributed in the earth's crust. Exposure to arsenic may cause adverse health effects, including death.

Asthma- A serious, chronic lung disease that causes the airways (bronchial tubes) to become narrow and makes it hard to breathe. Asthma attacks are often caused by environmental triggers, such as molds, dust mites, and tobacco smoke.

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Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)- A state-based system of health surveys that collects information on health risk behaviors, preventive health practices, and health care access primarily related to chronic disease and injury. States use BRFSS data to identify emerging health problems, establish and track health objectives, and develop and evaluate public health policies and programs.

Bio-monitoring- The direct measurement of people's exposure to toxic substances in the environment by measuring the substances or their metabolites in human specimens such as blood or urine.

Birth defects- Abnormalities of structure, function, or body metabolism that are present at birth. Birth defects include a wide range of abnormalities with varying levels of impact and can be caused by genetic, environmental, or unknown factors. Examples of birth defects include spina bifida, cleft palate, upper and lower limb deformities, and anencephaly.

Blood lead levels (BLLs)- A measure of the amount of lead in the bloodstream, which is the result of a standard blood test (screening) for children and adults.

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Cancer- A group of diseases that involves abnormal and uncontrolled cell growth. Cancers are caused by internal (genetic and hormonal) as well as external (viral, social, environmental) factors.



Carbon monoxide (CO)- Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas formed by combustion of fuels such as gasoline, oil, and wood. Exposure to carbon monoxide can cause sudden illness or death. Breathing too much carbon monoxide interferes with the body's absorption of oxygen and therefore is especially dangerous for people with respiratory and heart disease.

Carcinogen- Any agent (chemical, substance or radiation) capable of causing cancer in an exposed individual.

Cardiovascular- Refers to the heart (cardio) and the blood vessels (vascular). The cardiovascular system includes arteries, veins, and capillaries.

Cardiovascular Disease- A class of diseases that involves the heart or the blood vessels, including coronary heart disease, hypertension, stroke, and rheumatic heart disease.

Census- The procedure of systematically acquiring and recording information about the members of a given population. Census data usually contains details on residence, age, sex, occupation, ethnic group, marital status, birth history, and relationship to head of household.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)- CDC is the nation's premier health promotion, prevention, and preparedness agency and a global leader in public health. It remains at the forefront of public health efforts to prevent and control infectious and chronic diseases, injuries, workplace hazards, disabilities, and environmental health threats.

Chemical- A substance with a distinct molecular composition.

Chlorpyrifos- A broad-spectrum organophosphate insecticide. Since 2000, chlorpyrifos is no longer permitted to be used for pest control in households and buildings.

Cholesterol- A waxy, fat-like substance that occurs naturally in all parts of the body. Your body needs some cholesterol to work properly. But if you have too much in your blood, it can stick to the walls of your arteries.

Cholinesterase inhibitors – Chemicals which block the action of the enzyme cholinesterase. Cholinesterase is an enzyme which controls communication between nerves and muscles. Some pesticides act as cholinesterase inhibitors.

Chronic- Refers to something that continues or persists over a long period of time.

Clean Air Act- The federal law that defines EPA's responsibilities for protecting and improving the nation's air quality and the stratospheric ozone layer.

Cleft lip (with or without Cleft palate)- Refers to a birth defect where there is failure of the fetal components of the lip to fuse or join, forming a groove or fissure in the lip.

Cleft palate- A birth defect where there is failure of the palate to fuse properly, forming a grooved depression or fissure in the roof of the mouth. This defect varies in degree of severity. The fissure can extend into the hard and soft palate and into the nasal cavities.

Cluster investigation- A review of an unusual number, real or perceived, of health events (for example, reports of cancer) grouped together in time and location. Cluster investigations are designed to confirm case reports; determine whether they represent an unusual disease occurrence; and, explore potential causes and contributing environmental factors.

Clusters of health events- An unusual aggregation, real or perceived, of health events that are grouped together in time and space and that are reported to a health agency.

Collaborative- Working with another or others on a joint project.

Concentration- The amount of a substance per defined space. Concentration usually is expressed in terms of mass per unit volume. For example, the amount of ozone that is mixed with other compounds in the air is an example of ozone concentration.

Contaminant- Any substance or material that enters a system (such as the environment) where it is not normally found.

Contamination- Presence of contaminants, such as in the air, water or soil.

Correlation- A statistical measure of the degree to which two variables are related. Correlation alone is not evidence for a cause and effect relationship.

Criteria pollutants- EPA uses six "criteria pollutants" as indicators of air quality, and has established for each of them a maximum concentration above which adverse effects on human health may occur. These six pollutants are: Ozone, Nitrogen Oxides, Sulfur Oxides, Particulate Matter (less than 10 microns), Lead, and Carbon Monoxide.

Crude rate- A measure of overall frequency which has not been adjusted for significant factors which might have influenced the rate.

Cumulative exposure- The sum of exposures of an organism to a chemical or radiation over a period of time.

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Data element- A specific piece of data, such as an observation or aggregate of individual observations, needed to calculate a value of a measure.

Data limitations- Specific information related to the quality or completeness of the data that will help you understand it correctly.



Data Set- A collection of data.

Data source- The individual or organization that provides data.

Data suppression- Preventing public display of information to protect the confidentiality of personal information.

Deciliter- A metric measurement of volume consisting of one-tenth of a liter, abbreviated as "dL". Equivalent metric terms are 10 centiliters (cL) or 100 milliliters (mL). One deciliter is approximately 3 ounces.

Demographic group- A subpopulation of persons defined by the characteristics they share. Common demographic groups include age, race, ethnicity, and gender which are defined at birth. Other groups are defined by medical, behavioral, and environmental risk factors such as diabetes, smoking, or persons who live in high crime areas.

Demographic information-The characteristics used to describe a person or group of people. Examples include age, sex, race, and income level.

Dioxin- A group of toxic and environmentally persistent compounds created as by-products in many industrial processes and during the combustion of most types of organic matter.

Disease cluster- A group of related disease cases in a specific area or over a specific period of time.

Disease coding- The transformation of verbal descriptions of diseases, injuries, and procedures into numeric or alphanumeric designations. Originally, medical coding was performed to classify mortality (cause of death) data on death certificates. However, coding is also used to classify illness and disease and procedural data.

Disease rate- Measure of how frequently a disease occurs in a population.

Disinfectant byproducts- A compound formed by the reaction of a disinfectant such as chlorine with organic material in the water supply; a chemical byproduct of the disinfection process.

Disparities- A difference or lack of similarity or equality.

Dose- The amount of a substance that comes into contact with and enters a person's body (exposure) over a period of time.

Down syndrome (Trisomy 21) - A birth defect with chromosomal abnormality characterized by an extra copy of chromosome 21. Down syndrome is characterized by moderate to severe mental retardation, sloping forehead, small ear canals, flat bridged nose and short fingers and toes.

Duration- The length of time that something lasts or continues.

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Elemental carbon (EC)- Also known as black carbon, EC is a component of particulate matter. EC is produced in the combustion of fuels. Diesel exhaust is an important source.

Emissions- Something that is released or discharged such as substances and especially pollutants into the air.



Environment- Soil, water, air, plants and animals.

Environmental epidemiology- The study of the effect on human health by physical, biological, and chemical factors in the external environment. It can include examining specific populations or communities exposed to different ambient

environments to clarify the relationship between physical, biological, or chemical factors and human health.

Environmental hazards-Situations or conditions in which something in the environment, such as radiation, a chemical, or other pollutant, can cause human illness or injury.



Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)- EPA is the primary federal agency responsible for administering federal environmental laws.

Environmental Public Health Surveillance- Gathering and monitoring data on environmental exposures of public health concern to identify problems and effective solutions and to reduce the burden of environment-related health effects.



Environmental Public Health Tracking-The ongoing collection, integration, analysis, and interpretation of data about environmental hazards, exposure to environmental hazards, and human health effects potentially related to exposure to environmental hazards. It includes dissemination of information learned from these data.

Environmental sampling data- Information gathered from samples of air, water, or soil collected at specific locations to measure contamination.

Environmental toxicology- Scientific analysis of the relationship between exposure to hazardous substances found in the environment and adverse health effects.

Epidemiologist- A scientist who studies the distribution of disease and risk factors of disease in human populations.

ESSENCE- Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics (ESSENCE) software is a system that inputs electronic emergency department (ED) data for the purpose of syndromic surveillance. Syndromic surveillance is the use of non-traditional data sources in order to detect public health events earlier than possible with other methods (laboratory confirmed diagnosis, physician diagnosis).

Ethnicity- A group based on cultural and social affiliation, common history and origin, and sense of identification with the group.

Evaluation- A systematic and objective process to determine the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of activities in the light of their goals.

Exposure- Contact with a chemical by swallowing, breathing, or direct contact (such as through the skin or eyes).

Exposure data- Information related to contaminants in a human body.

Exposure pathway-The route a substance takes from where it began, its source, to its end point, and how people can come into contact with the substance.

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Fetal death- A fetus which after complete expulsion or extraction from the woman, does not breathe or show evidence of life such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or definite movement of the voluntary muscles. By Missouri statute, a stillbirth of at least 20 weeks gestation or 350 grams must be reported.

Fertility- The actual conception and birth.

Fetus- A developing mammal in utero. In humans, the fetal stage of prenatal development begins about eight weeks after fertilization, when the major structures and organ systems have formed, and lasts until birth.

Fine particulate matter- Air particles, such as those found in smoke and haze, that are 2.5 micrometers in diameter and smaller.



Fish advisory- The Missouri Fish Consumption Advisory provides advice on the amount of sport-caught fish to safely eat and encourages individuals to eat a healthy diet that includes fish.

Frequency- The number of times that an event occurs within a given period; rate of recurrence.

Fungicide- A pesticide used to control the growth of fungus and molds.

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Gastroschisis- A birth defect where there is an opening of the abdominal wall with protrusion of the intestines.

Gender- A female, male, total or all.

Geocode- The process of identifying the coordinates of a location in space. This process is used so data and information can be shown on a map. Typically data begin as addresses and are converted to coordinates using the geocoding process of latitude and longitude.

Geographical data- Data pertaining to the study of the natural features of the earth's surface, region(s) including topography, climate, soil, vegetation, etc, and man's response to them.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)- A computer-based software system that enables the creation, analysis and application of geographic data or other information linked to specific locations on a map.

Gestation- The carrying of a fetus in the uterus.

Gestational age- The period of time between conception and birth during which the fetus grows and develops inside the mother's womb. It is the time measured from the first day of the woman's last menstrual cycle to the current date. It is measured in weeks. A normal pregnancy can range from 38 to 42 weeks.



Google Earth- A virtual globe, map and geographical information program that maps the Earth by the superimposition of images obtained from satellite imagery, aerial photography and GIS 3D globe.

Ground level ozone (also called Ozone)- A gas composed of three oxygen atoms. While ozone in the upper atmosphere is necessary, in the earth's lower atmosphere, ozone is considered unhealthy.

Groundwater- Water beneath the earth's surface. It is a major source of water for agricultural and industrial purposes, and an important source of drinking water for about half of all Americans.

Growth retardation- The poor growth of a fetus while in the mother's womb during pregnancy.

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Hazardous substance- Any material that poses a threat to human health and/or the environment. Typical hazardous substances are toxic, corrosive, ignitable, explosive, or chemically reactive.

Health effect or health outcome- A disease, condition or symptoms of illness.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)- A US law designed to provide privacy standards to protect patients' medical records and other health information provided to health plans, doctors, hospitals and other health care providers.

Healthy Indoor Environments- An initiative to promote designing, building, maintaining, and renovating indoor environments in ways that support the health of Missouri citizens where they live, work and go to school.

Heart attack- An acute health event in which one of more regions of the heart muscle experience a severe or prolonged decrease in oxygen supply caused by a blocked blood flow to the heart muscle. A heart attack is also called a Myocardial Infarction (MI).

Herbicide- A pesticide used to kill or control undesirable plants (generally considered weeds).

High-density lipoprotein (HDL)- One of the five major groups of lipoproteins which enable lipids like cholesterol and triglycerides to be transported within the water-based bloodstream. In healthy individuals, about thirty percent of blood cholesterol is carried by HDL.

High-risk group- A group of people that is more likely than other groups to be exposed to a certain chemical or develop a certain disease.

Hispanic (Ethnicity)- A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

Hydrocarbon- A chemical compound consisting only of hydrogen and carbon. Hydrocarbons, which occur naturally in petroleum, natural gas, coal, and wood, are often used as fuels.

Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome- A birth defect that occurs when the left side of the heart, including the aorta, aortic valve, left ventricle and mitral valve, is underdeveloped. This condition is usually fatal in the first month of life if not treated.

Hypospadias- A birth defect in which the urinary outlet is on the underside of the penis or on the perineum (area between the genitals and the anus).

Hyperthermia- An elevated body temperature due to failed thermoregulation. Hyperthermia occurs when the body produces or absorbs more heat than it can dissipate.

Hypothermia- A condition in which core temperature drops below the required temperature for normal metabolism and body functions which is defined as 35.0 °C (95.0 °F).

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Incidence- The number of new cases of a disease or conditions that develop within a specified period of time.

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)- The overall state of the air inside a building as reflected by the presence of pollutants, such as dust, fungi, animal dander, volatile organic compounds, carbon monoxide, and lead.

Indicator- An indirect measurement of a system's status. An environmental public health indicator (EPHI) provides information about a population's health status with respect to environmental factors. It can be used to assess health or a factor associated with health (i.e., risk factor, intervention) in a specified population through direct or indirect measures.

Infant mortality- The number of deaths among children under one year of age.

Infectious agent- A living microorganism that enters, invades, or inhabits another organism, causing infection, health effects, and/or contamination.

Informatics- In public health, the method or background for current and future efforts to improve the information systems that support essential public health functions.

Inhalation- Breathing in; the movement of air into the lungs.

Insecticide- A pesticide used to kill or control undesirable insects.

International Classification of Diseases (ICD)- A system produced by an internationally representative group that classifies diseases by giving each a unique code.

Intervention- Taking actions in public health so as to reduce adverse health effects.

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Latency period - The period of time between exposure to something that causes a disease and the onset of the disease.

Layers- A thematic set of spatial data described and stored in a geographic database. Layers organize a database or map library by subject matter (e.g., counties, roads, and hospitals). Layers can be added or deleted from the visual presentation of a map.

Level of significance- The likelihood that an event occurred due to chance. When planning a research study, scientists commonly choose a level of significance of 5% or less.



Lead (Pb)- A soft, heavy, blue-gray metal. Lead is hazardous to human health. Lead exposure can occur through contaminated air, water, soil, food, and consumer products.

Legend- The reference area on a map that lists and explains the colors, symbols, line patterns, shadings, and annotation used on the map. The legend often includes the scale, origin, orientation, and other map information.

Live Birth-The complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a product of human conception, irrespective of the duration of pregnancy, which, after such expulsion or extraction, breathes, or shows any other evidence of life, such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or definite movement of voluntary muscles, whether or not the umbilical cord has been cut or the placenta is attached. Heartbeats are to be distinguished from transient cardiac contractions; respirations are to be distinguished from fleeting respiratory efforts or gasps."

Low birth weight- A baby is considered to be of low birth weight when its weight is less than 5.5 lbs, or 2500 grams, at birth. For Tracking, low birth weight is measured among singleton births only.

Low-density lipoprotein (LDL)- is one of the five major groups of lipoproteins that enable lipids like cholesterol and triglycerides to be transported within the bloodstream. LDL can clog arteries, increasing the risk of heart disease.

Lower Limb Deficiencies (Congenital Amputation, Proximal Femoral Focal Deficiency) - A birth defect where a portion of the lower limb is absent.

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Maternal Age- Is the age of the mother at the time that her child is delivered.

Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)- The highest level of a substance allowed in public drinking water by the EPA intended to protect people from adverse health effects of contaminants and taking into consideration technical feasibility of removal.

Mean- The average of a list of numbers determined by calculating the sum of all the members of the list and dividing by the number of items in the list.

Measure- A summary characteristic or statistic, such as a sum, percentage, or rate. Measures are available for each indicator.

Medicaid- A state/federal assistance program administered by the state that provides medical insurance to individuals who meet specific eligibility criteria. In Missouri the Medicaid program is named MO HealthNet.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)- A legal document that defines a relationship or agreement between departments, agencies or interested parties.

Mercury- A naturally occurring element that is found in air, water and soil. It exists in several forms: elemental or metallic mercury, inorganic mercury compounds, and organic mercury compounds. Elemental or metallic mercury is a shiny, silver-white metal and is liquid at room temperature. Exposure to mercury can adversely affect the central nervous system.

Metadata- Information about information. A set of information that describes each source of data on the EPHT Portal, including publishing organization, purpose, access, quality, and date range available. Users can use key words to search Metadata to find out what data sources are available on the Portal and to learn more about them.

Methamphetamine- A powerful central nervous system stimulant. The drug works directly on the brain and spinal cord.

Microclimates- Localized conditions of temperature and precipitation. For example, a microclimate could occur around a stand of trees.

Microgram- A unit of mass equal to one millionth of a gram.

Micron- A unit of length equal to one millionth of a meter.

Milligram- A unit of mass equal to one thousandth of a gram.

Mitigation- To alleviate or moderate in force or intensity.

Modeling- Using mathematical formulas (statistics or computer analysis) to simulate and predict real events.

Morbidity- The occurrence of a disease or condition that alters health and quality of life.

Mortality- A fatal outcome; death.

Missouri Health Strategic Architectures and Information Cooperative (MOHSAIC)- The integrated, population based registry database that is used for immunizations, communicable disease, environmental surveillance and reportable disease documentation for DHSS. MOHSAIC is compatible with Public Health Information Network (PHIN) standards and has the technical infrastructure in place to receive electronic data submissions using Health Language 7 (HL7) to meet the objectives of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH).

Missouri Information for Community Assessment (MICA)- An interactive system that allows the user to create and download tables, based on selected variables from numerous data files. These data sets provide information on health conditions and associated topics.

Myocardial infarction (MI) – An acute health event in which one of more regions of the heart muscle experience a severe or prolonged decrease in oxygen supply caused by a blocked blood flow to the heart muscle. An MI is also called a heart attack.

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NAPHSIS

National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS)- A national association of state vital records and public health statistics offices which is based in the Washington, DC area. The association was formed in 1933 to provide a forum for the study, discussion, and solution of problems related to these programs in the respective members' health departments.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) - Federal limits for acceptable concentrations of each of the six criteria pollutants in air. The standards apply to outdoor air throughout the country.

Nationally Consistent Data & Measures (NCDM)- Standards and guidelines to facilitate nationally consistent data collection, to ensure compatibility with existing standards efforts and to identify and recommend methods and tools for data integration, analysis and presentation.

Neonatal mortality- Deaths among children from birth up to but not including 28 days of age.

Nitrate/Nitrite- A compound containing nitrogen and oxygen which can cause severe illness in infants and domestic animals. Nitrates/nitrites are essential plant nutrients and inorganic fertilizer.

Nitrogen oxides- A criteria air pollutant. Nitrogen oxides (collectively known as NO_x) are produced from burning fossil fuels, including gasoline and coal. Nitrogen oxides are also major components of acid rain. They may be harmful to the lungs and aggravate asthmatic symptoms.

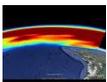
Non-infectious agents- Non-living or abiotic force or substance capable of producing adverse health effects.

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Occupational- Relating to work or employment.

Occupational Health- Programs aimed at preventing health problems or concerns related to the workplace.

Organic- Develop naturally or relating to, or grown with the use of fertilizers or pesticides deriving from animal or vegetable matter, rather than from chemicals.



Ozone (O₃)- A gas composed of three oxygen atoms. While ozone in the upper atmosphere is necessary, in the earth's lower atmosphere, ozone is considered unhealthy.

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P-Value- The statistical probability that an event did not occur by chance.

Particulate matter- A complex mixture of extremely small solid particles and mists, also known as particle pollution or PM. Smaller particles of 10 micrometers in diameter or smaller more easily bypass the natural defenses of the body, and are more easily inhaled deep into lung tissue, where they can cause health problems.

Part per billion (ppb)- Unit of measurement commonly used to express a contamination concentration, as in establishing the maximum permissible amount of a contaminant in water, land, or air.

Part per million (ppm)- Unit of measurement commonly used to express a contamination concentration, as in establishing the maximum permissible amount of a contaminant in water, land, or air.

Pathogen- A disease-causing organism.

Prenatal exposure- Exposure that occurs to the fetus during pregnancy (before birth). When a pregnant woman is exposed to any substance, situation or event, her unborn child may be exposed as well.

Perinatal mortality- Fetal deaths combined with infant deaths that occur up to six days after birth.

Perinatal period- Refers to the period starting from 28 weeks of gestation and up to six days of life.

Percentile- A measure that tells us what percent of the total frequency scored at or below that value.

Persistent chemicals- Chemical substances that do not readily break down in the environment.



Pesticide- Any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest. The term pesticide may apply to insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides and various other substances used to control pests.

Pew Environmental Health Commission- In May 1999, the Pew Charitable Trusts launched a blue-ribbon commission charged with proposing recommendations to bolster America's ability to track and prevent health problems linked to environmental conditions. In January 2001, this panel, the Pew Environmental Health Commission; which included leaders from the public policy, health industry, government, academic and nonprofit communities, released a report calling for a nationwide health effects monitoring and tracking network. This document has been used for planning and guidance for the development and implementation of EPHT. <http://www.pewenvirohealth.jhsph.edu/html/reports/trackingcompanion.pdf>



Poison- A substances that can cause disturbances to organisms, usually by chemical reaction or other activity on the molecular scale, when a sufficient quantity is absorbed by an organism.

Pollution- Presence of contaminants in the air, water or soil.

Post-neonatal mortality- Deaths among children from 28 days up to but not including one year of age.

Preterm birth- Preterm birth is the birth of an infant at least three weeks before the due date (less than 37 weeks gestation). For EPHT, preterm births are measured among singleton births only.

Prevalence- Proportion of individuals in a population at a given time who have a particular disease or health-related outcome.

Prevention- Proactive activities conducted to avoid health hazards and their consequences.

Primary standard- An air pollution limit set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a criteria pollutant and based on health effects.

Profile- An informal biography or information about a person that produces or presents a history, description, or analysis.

Public Health Information Network (PHIN)- CDC's vision for advancing fully capable and interoperable information systems in the many organizations that participate in public health. PHIN is a national initiative to implement a multi-organizational business and technical architecture for public health information systems.

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Query- A search for data or information in a database.

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Race- The classification of humans into large and distinct populations or groups by factors such as appearance and geographic ancestry, but also often influenced by and correlated with traits such as, culture, ethnicity, and socio-economic status.

Radionuclide- Any man-made or natural element that emits radiation.

Radon- A gaseous radioactive element that occurs from the natural breakdown of uranium in the soil and rocks. It is colorless, odorless, and tasteless.

Rate- A measure of the frequency with which an event occurs in a defined population over a period of time.

Ratio- The relationship in quantity, amount, or size between two or more things.

Reproductive health- Health of the male and female reproductive and sexual organs. The term is also applied to issues relating to the reproductive process, such as fertility, and pregnancy outcomes like infant mortality and preterm delivery.

Research- A carefully planned and performed investigation, searching for previously unknown facts or a study done to answer a question. Other words to describe clinical research are clinical trial, protocol, study, and experiment.

Resolution- The amount of detail that can be seen or shown on a map or other representation of data.

Respiratory health- Relating to the health of the lungs and the other parts of the respiratory system that affect breathing.

Risk assessment- The determination of quantitative or qualitative value of the likelihood of an event occurring.

Risk factor- Anything that increases a person's chance of getting a disease or other adverse health effect. Risk factors may include personal behavior or lifestyle, an environmental exposure, or a genetic characteristic.

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Schema- Describes and defines the structure and content of a document or data set. The document or data set is then validated against the schema to verify if it conforms to the necessary requirements.

Secondary standard- A air pollution limit set by the EPA for a criteria pollutant and based on environmental effects such as damage to property, plants, visibility, etc.

Sentinel events- Any unanticipated event in a healthcare setting resulting in death or serious physical or psychological injury to a patient or patients, not related to the natural course of the patient's illness.

Sex Ratio at Birth - The ratio of male to female births.

Significance- A statistical term for the probability that an event was not random. Significance is actually a continuous spectrum, but a common benchmark for significance is $P < 0.05$ (the probability of the event being random is less than 5%).

Singleton birth - The conception and birth of a single child in contrast to multiple births i.e., twins, triplets, etc.

Smog- A mixture of pollutants, principally ground-level ozone, produced by chemical reactions in the air. Smog can harm health, damage the environment, and hinder visibility.

Smoothing- The process of averaging a measure in a data set to remove fluctuations in the data and capture important patterns or trends while leaving out fine-scale occurrences.

Socioeconomic status- A combined measure of an individual or family's economic and social position relative to others, based on such characteristics as income, education, and occupation.

Soil- The top layer of the earth's surface, consisting of rock and mineral particles mixed with organic matter.

Source of contamination- The place or material where contamination originates.

Spatial analysis- The study of phenomena (such as exposure and health outcome) in relation to its distribution across space (such as geographical location).

Stakeholders- A person, group, organization, or system that affects or can be affected by an organization's actions.

Standard- A basis for comparison or a reference point against which other things can be evaluated.

Statistics- The science of the collection, organization, and interpretation of data. It deals with all aspects of this, including the planning of data collection in terms of the design of surveys and experiments.

Statistical test- An analysis of how likely chance could have produced an apparent connection between two variables. For example, a statistical test may be used to determine whether an exposure is associated with a disease.

Surface water- Water that is at the surface of the land, such as lakes, rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands, floodwater, and run off.

Spina bifida- A neural tube birth defect resulting from failure of the spinal neural tube to close. This usually results in damage to the spinal cord with paralysis of the involved limbs; includes myelomeningocele (involving both spinal cord and meninges) and meningocele (involving just the meninges).

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)- The sudden death of an infant less than one year of age that cannot be explained after a thorough investigation is conducted, including a complete autopsy, examination of the death scene, and review of the clinical history.

Sulfur dioxide (SO₂)- A colorless gas formed during the burning of fuels containing sulfur, such as coal. Breathing SO₂ may irritate the respiratory system and aggravate asthmatic symptoms.

Suppression- A statistical practice used to protect patient confidentiality and potentially identifying information by withholding or excluding small numbers within a specific demographic or geography.

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Target population- A group of people living within a specified area or sharing similar characteristics (such as occupation or age) identified as the focus of a study or investigation, or the recipients of specific actions or outreach.

Term birth- Birth at or later than 37 completed weeks of gestation.

Tetralogy of fallot- A cardiac birth anomaly consisting of four defects: ventricular septal defect, pulmonary valve stenosis or atresia, displacement of the aorta to the right, and hypertrophy of right ventricle. The condition is corrected surgically.

Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) – EPA’s list of reported releases by industry for more than 600 designated chemicals that threaten health and the environment. EPA compiles the data in an online, publicly accessible national computerized database.

Transposition of the Great Arteries- A birth defect in which the aorta arises from the right ventricle and the pulmonary artery from the left ventricle (opposite of normal), so that the venous return from the peripheral circulation is re-circulated without being oxygenated in the lungs; immediate surgical correction is needed.

Triglycerides- A type of fat in the bloodstream and fat tissue. Too much of this type of fat can contribute to the hardening and narrowing of arteries. Often, high triglycerides occur along with high levels of cholesterol.

Trimester- A period of three months; especially one of the three three-month periods into which human pregnancy is divided.

Turbidity- The cloudy appearance of water caused by the presence of tiny particles. High levels of turbidity may interfere with proper water treatment and monitoring.

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Upper Limb Deficiencies- A birth defect in which there is an absence of a portion of the upper limb.



US Census Bureau- The federal agency responsible for data about the nation's people and economy.



US Geological Survey (USGS)- A federal agency that provides scientific information on ecosystems, the environment, natural hazards, natural resources, climate change, and more.

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Values- A numerical quantity that is assigned or is determined by calculation or measurement.

Vital statistics- Data derived from certificates and reports of birth, death, fetal death, induced termination of pregnancy, marriage, and related reports.

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) - Substances containing carbon that are emitted as gases from certain solids or liquids. VOCs are commonly found in gasoline, solvents (paint thinners, lacquer thinner, degreasers, and dry cleaning fluids), oil-based paints and inks, and consumer products, such as aerosol spray products.

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Water quality criteria - Refers to levels of water quality expected to render a body of water suitable for its designated use. Criteria are based on specific levels of pollutants that would make the water harmful if used for drinking, swimming, farming, fish production, or industrial processes.

Watershed- The land area from which water drains into a stream, river, or reservoir.

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ZIP Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs[™]) - A statistical entity developed by the U.S. Census Bureau for tabulating summary statistics from Census 2000. This new entity was developed to overcome the difficulties in precisely defining the land area covered by each ZIP Code[®]. Defining the extent of an area is necessary in order to accurately tabulate census data for that area.

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